



THE PHYSICIAN'S *Bookshelf*

MANAGING YOUR CORONARY. William A. Brams. M.D. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1953. 158 pages, \$2.95.

Philosophy has been defined as the attempt to explain phenomena. One of the greatest of the phenomena of the twentieth century is the avidity for medical and quasi-medical obiter dicta on the part of the public. The various special societies devoted to certain diseases (and the raising of funds for the full time staff) are educating the public almost ad nauseam. Indeed, many students of mankind would sooner have John Citizen worry about Mr. Thurber and his works, rather than about their own innards. Be that as it may, the spate of popular writings continues.

The present monograph consists essentially of eight chapters which cover the growing problem of coronary thrombosis, the doctor's diagnosis, the mechanics of cardiac action, the behavior of the heart under attack, and the process of healing. Finally there is a cheerful section on how science is helping you after the heart attack.

One page is enticingly headed "The Picture of Your Heart's Electrical Activity" and is accompanied by "Figure 1—The Typical Changes in the Electrocardiogram Following an Attack of Coronary Thrombosis." This reviewer is no cardiologist, but he is familiar with the vagaries in the interpretation of electrocardiograms, normal and otherwise, even by the most erudite. The wisdom of reproducing such tracings in a popular manual is to be debated.

On pages 36 and 37 there is a graphic description of a lady whose upside-down stomach had squeezed into the front of her chest and pushed her heart violently to one side. It is to be hoped that the writer will submit this phenomenal case to scientific documentation. We wonder who the consulting radiologist was during the dramatically described roentgen examination.

The final chapter culminates with seven segments of sound advice. If followed faithfully by all citizens, it is highly probable that most would rust away rather than wear out. We suspect that it is more entertaining to end our terrestrial existence in the latter manner. Even in a welfare state, living to 120 will be of dubious benefit, unless some bright genius invents a game more entertaining than the chase.

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BASIC PROBLEMS IN PSYCHIATRY. Edited by Joseph Wortis, M.D., Jewish Hospital of Brooklyn. Grune & Stratton, New York, 1953. 186 pages, \$4.50.

This book of 182 pages consists of an Introduction and Comments, and Conclusions, by Dr. Joseph Wortis, with six chapters by different authors. The Introduction is extremely well written and discusses some very basic material and raises interesting questions. The first chapter on "The Scope and Limitations of Psychiatry," by Dr. Benjamin Pasamanick, questions a number of our basic concepts and ways in which we are dealing with problems, and offers some interesting suggestions. He stresses the view empha-

sized by many sociologists, that juvenile delinquency and crime are usually not a product of psychological disorder, but rather a sign of social dislocation. From this, the conclusion is drawn that the psychiatric treatment of individual delinquents is in general not an adequate way of dealing with these problems. There is further emphasis on the idea that the psychiatrist is a Doctor of Medicine and that in some ways he has been getting away from this approach to psychiatry.

The succeeding chapters on "The Conditional Reflex," "Psychology and Culture," "The Validity of Mental Testing," "Schools of Psychiatry," and "The Psychosomatic Symptoms," are all well done.

Dr. Wortis' comments and conclusions are an excellent summary of the material as presented. This whole book is, in general, simply and clearly written, has much basic material that is of interest and deals with it in a controversial fashion. It will well repay reading it.

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HOLT PEDIATRICS—12th Edition—L. Emmett Holt, Jr., Professor of Pediatrics, New York University College of Medicine, and Rustin McIntosh, Carpenter Professor of Pediatrics, Columbia University. Twelfth Edition of Holt's Diseases of Infancy and Childhood. Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1953. 1485 pages, \$15.00.

This twelfth edition of a famous and authoritative text appears under a new title, after an interval of 13 years from the last revision, and has been urgently needed for at least eight years. From the time of the first edition written by the senior author's father in 1896 and through its later revisions at the hands of John Howland, Edwards Park and the present authors, until perhaps the middle 1940s, it remained the outstanding one-volume pediatric text in English in terms of completeness, authority and practical usefulness to both medical students and practicing pediatricians. As a result of the extremely rapid and extensive expansion of knowledge in the field, it had become obsolescent and its place taken by other texts, notably Mitchell-Nelson.

It is gratifying to find the present revision again up-to-date, thorough, authoritative and practically useful. Reflecting the expansion and specialization within pediatrics, individual sections have been prepared by no fewer than 72 contributors in addition to the senior authors. In some instances sections have been written by authorities in non-pediatric fields; among these may be mentioned George W. Thorn, professor of medicine at Harvard, whose chapter on the adrenal gland is outstanding; Frank B. Walsh, associate professor of ophthalmology at Hopkins, who wrote much of the chapter on the eye; and Gilbert F. Otto, also of Hopkins, who prepared the section on parasitology. Frank R. Ford's section on neurology also deserves special mention.

No detailed review of so large a text is possible in short space. Descriptions of the astonishingly multifarious phases